

Minority Health Facts

AFRICAN AMERICANS in Rhode Island

INTRODUCTION

This report provides information about major health indicators in the African American/Black population of Rhode Island. An African American/Black is defined by the Office of Management and Budget (Directive 15) as a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. A White person is defined as a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

This report presents data on socio-economic characteristics, morbidity and mortality, behavioral risks, infectious disease, maternal and child health, and access to healthcare among African American/Black Rhode Islanders in comparison to the White non-Hispanic and the overall state populations. Please note that race and ethnic status for some Health Department data sets are based on self-identification.

POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census 2005 American Community Survey, there are 65,032 African Americans in Rhode Island (RI), making this group the second largest minority population in the state. Approximately 6.3% of the total RI population is African American. Nearly 99% of African Americans in the state live in urban areas. The median age for the African American population is 27 years whereas the total state median age is 38 years. Nearly 83.9% of the African American population is age 50 or less, while 70.2% the state population is age 50 or less.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

The following are socio-economic characteristics of Rhode Island's African American population from the 2000 Census. These characteristics may affect the health of African American Rhode Islanders.

- The percentage of African Americans living below poverty level is almost three times that of the overall state population and almost four times that of the White population.
- The median household income for African Americans is \$25,100— \$19,400 less than the state median and about \$20,200 less than the White population.
- A lower percentage of African Americans graduate from high school than the overall state and the White populations.
- The percentage of African Americans who are unemployed is more than two times the percentage unemployed in the overall state and the White populations.



Table A: Socio-Economic Data

	AFRICAN AMERICAN	WHITE (NON- HISPANIC)	STATE
Percentage of population living below poverty ¹	30.0	7.9	11.9
Percentage of population that is unemployed ²	7.5	3.1	3.6
Median household income ³	\$25.1k	\$45.3k	\$44.5k
High School graduation rate ⁴ (percent)	78.0	88.0	85.0

SOURCES: ¹U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000; 1999 data.

²U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000; 2000 data.

³U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000; 2001 estimates.

⁴RI Kids Count Factbook, 2006; 2005 data.

MORTALITY

- The top three causes of death for both the African American and the overall state populations are heart disease, cancer, and stroke. While diabetes and unintentional injuries are ranked as the fourth and fifth leading causes of death in the African American population, these causes of death are not ranked among the top five for the overall state or the White populations.

BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTORS

- The percentage of African Americans who participate in physical activity is less than that of the White or the overall state populations.
- The percentage of African Americans who consume at least five servings of fruits and vegetables is similar to the White and the overall state populations.
- Since 2000, the African American population has made progress in closing the gap in obesity, vegetable consumption, and smoking indicators compared to both the overall state and White populations.



Table B: Leading Causes of Death, 2000-2004

	AFRICAN AMERICAN	WHITE (NON-HISPANIC)	STATE
1	Heart disease	Heart disease	Heart disease
2	Cancer	Cancer	Cancer
3	Stroke	Stroke	Stroke
4	Diabetes	Chronic respiratory diseases	Chronic respiratory diseases
5	Unintentional injuries	Pneumonia/influenza	Pneumonia/influenza

SOURCE: RI Dept. of Health, Division of Vital Records, RI Resident Deaths, ICD-10 Codes, 2000-2004.

Table C: Behavioral Risk Factor Indicators

	AFRICAN AMERICAN	WHITE (NON-HISPANIC)	STATE
Percentage of adult population ¹ that participates in light to moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day (2001, 2003, 2005)	42.4	51.4	49.8
Percentage of adult population that is overweight ² (20 yrs. or more) (2000-2005)	36.9	38.4	38.2
Percentage of adult population that is obese ³ (20 yrs. or more) (2002-2005)	22.3	19.2	19.6
Percentage of adult population that consumes at least five daily servings of fruits and vegetables per day (2002, 2003, 2005)	26.5	27.9	27.5
Percentage of adult population that smokes cigarettes (2002-2005)	22.8	21.6	21.4
Percentage of adult population that consumed 5+ drinks on one or more occasions in past month (binge-drinking) (2002-2005)	15.5	17.4	17.2

SOURCE: RI Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

¹Adult population refers to individuals 18 years and older unless otherwise specified.

²Overweight defined by CDC as BMI ≥ 25 to <30 .

³Obesity defined by CDC as BMI ≥ 30 .

**Table D: Incidence Rates of Infectious Diseases:
Cases per 100,000 Population**

	AFRICAN AMERICAN	WHITE (NON- HISPANIC)	STATE
Gonorrhea ¹	379.3	21.3	41.8
Chlamydia ¹	2,103.9	133.5	311.8
Tuberculosis ²	11.9	2.0	4.5
HIV ³	64.0	6.1	17.2

SOURCES: RI Dept. of Health, Office of Communicable Diseases

¹Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) Surveillance Data 2005.

²Tuberculosis Database 2005.

³HIV/AIDS Surveillance Data 2005.

Table E: Maternal and Child Health Indicators

	AFRICAN AMERICAN	WHITE (NON- HISPANIC)	STATE
Percentage of pregnant women with delayed prenatal care ¹	17.7	8.6	9.9
Rate of births to teens ages 15-19 (per 1,000 teens) ¹	77.0	30.0	31.0
Percentage of births to mothers with less than 12 years of education ¹	23.1	13.9	15.2
Percentage of infants with low birth weight (<5.5 lbs.) ¹	11.4	7.4	8.0
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) ²	12.4	5.6	6.4
Percentage of children in poverty (<18 yrs.) ³	53.0	12.0	19.5

SOURCES: ¹RI Dept. of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2001-2005.

²Infant Mortality Database, 2001-2005.

³RI Kids Count Factbook 2006; 2005 data.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

- The rate of gonorrhea is nine times higher in the African American population than in the overall state population and almost eighteen times higher than the White population.
- The rate of chlamydia is almost seven times higher in the African American population than in the overall state population and almost sixteen times higher than the White population.
- In 2005, the rate of tuberculosis cases was about 2.5 times higher for African Americans than it was for the overall state population and almost six times higher than the White population.
- HIV rates are almost four times higher for African Americans than the overall state population and about ten times higher than the White population.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

- The overall state and the White populations have more favorable maternal and child health outcome indicators than the African American population in Rhode Island.
- A larger percentage of African Americans have delayed prenatal care, and the rate of teen births for African Americans is more than twice that of the overall state and the White teen populations.
- The rate of death of African American infants before their first birthday is about twice that of the overall state and the White populations.
- The percentage of African American children who grow up in poverty is more than 2.5 times that of the overall state population of children, and more than four times that of White children.



ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

- A higher percentage of African Americans report *having no health insurance* than the overall state and the White populations.
- A higher percentage of African Americans also report being *unable to afford a doctor* at some point in time than the overall state and the White populations.
- A higher percentage of African American women report having a pap test in the past 3 years and having a mammogram in the past 2 years than the White population or the state overall.

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Table F: Access to Healthcare Indicators

	AFRICAN AMERICAN	WHITE (NON- HISPANIC)	STATE
Percentage of adults less than 65 years old that report having no health insurance ¹ (2002-2005)	13.4	7.6	10.5
Percentage of adults that report having no specific source of ongoing healthcare ¹ (2000-2001)	17.7	14.2	15.6
Percentage of population (all ages) stating usual source of care as none or emergency room ² (2000-2001)	4.6	4.6	4.9
Percentage of women aged 40+ that report receiving a mammogram in the past 2 yrs ^{1,3} (2001, 2002, 2004)	94.1	90.0	90.1
Percentage of women that reported having a pap test in the past 3 yrs ^{1,3} (2001, 2002, 2004)	89.2	86.1	86.9
Percentage of adults that said "yes" when asked if there was a time they could not afford to see a doctor ¹ (2003-2005)	14.4	7.5	9.3

SOURCES: ¹RI Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

²RI Health Interview Survey.

³The denominator includes only women who have ever been screened.

For more information regarding minority health and the statistics contained in this report, please contact:

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